

OFPP Targets Acquisition Workforce Training for Efficiencies and Strategic Sourcing

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In an effort to save money, reduce duplication and improve outcomes the Director of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy, Joseph Jordan, has decided to consolidate management of federal acquisition training efforts into one consolidated system and apply a strategic sourcing approach to obtaining procurement training.

In a [memo](#) to Chief Acquisition Officers and senior procurement executives, Jordan recognized the role that well-trained acquisitions personnel can have on the effectiveness, efficiency and value of government procurements and wants to improve upon and reduce the cost of the management of their training. To save money through reducing duplicative training and development efforts Jordan tasked the [Federal Acquisition Institute](#) (FAI) to reduce duplication of workforce management information systems and leverage scarce training resources across agencies.

The directives for federal civilian agencies include:

- Mandated use of the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS), the government-wide acquisition workforce career management system managed by GSA. Aimed at improving acquisition workforce management, agencies are directed to use FAITAS to:
 - Collect and maintain user profiles of standardized information by January 1, 2014
 - Apply for certifications by April 1, 2014
 - Track continuous learning points in the FAITAS Continuous Learning Module by June 1, 2014
 - Manage training registrations for agency-provided acquisition training by October 1, 2014
- Creation of a government-wide Federal Acquisition Council on Training (FACT) chaired by FAI that will focus on increasing efficiencies and economies in acquisition certification and continuous learning training, according to the interview. The specific objectives are to leverage commercially available training, promulgate course development standards, increase agency collaboration, and identify lead agencies in the development of common curricula.

Strategic Sourcing Contract on the Way

In a recent [interview](#) with Federal News Radio, Jordan said these changes would put civilian agencies' "workforce management tools into one place, ... optimize our resources, ... [and] maximize the efficacy of every training opportunity." The Federal Acquisition Council on Training (FACT) will oversee several initiatives, including developing a new contract run by FAI and the General Services Administration from which all agencies would buy acquisition training. The move advances the idea of shared services that has gained in acceptance across agencies and applies it to procurement training, according to the interview. Both the Bush and Obama Administrations have supported a growing role for FAI. The FY 2014 budget requests a total budget of over \$15 million for FAI, a \$6.2 million increase.

At a recent Northern Virginia Technology Council (NVTC) [event](#) Jordan emphasized improving the acquisition workforce as one of his top three priorities, alongside buying smarter – focusing on leveraging data to do it better, and identifying the right suppliers – building the right relationships, especially with small business. Jordan is focused on recruitment, retention, and training, plus changing agency cultures to encourage innovation versus inappropriate risk aversion when it comes to acquisitions. In her remarks, OFPP Deputy Administrator Lesley Field highlighted strategic sourcing and acquisition policy as means to removing duplication in buying and improving IT management. She emphasized the improvement and development of the acquisition workforce community in systems, communications and the FAR.

Implications

The decision to center on FAITAS as the main civilian acquisition training management system could gain it some additional funding for maintenance and enhancements, but that is yet to be seen. In the FY 2014 IT budget GSA requested \$2.4 million for FAITAS, which includes about \$850 thousand in new development spending (35% of total) slated for next year. That is down from the enacted FY 2013 budget of \$2.8 million but 40% higher than the FY 2012 budget of \$1.7 million. Given the due dates listed in the memo it is likely that any enhancement related to the new mandates are either done or underway.

The application of strategic sourcing to acquisition training is no surprise, given OFPP's and GSA's efforts to increase strategic sourcing. The [Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative](#) (FSSI) has been a big priority for both agencies. In December 2012 OMB created the [Strategic Sourcing Leadership Council](#) (SSLC), the follow-on to the Strategic Sourcing Working Group (SSWG), to lead the government's efforts in this area. Jordan's reference to an upcoming FACT government-wide training contract may or may not be a reference to an existing [GSA Acquisition Training Delivery IDIQ opportunity](#) that is currently being protested. A determination is due in November 2013. Either way, the protest underscores the highly competitive environment we are in and the challenge these kinds of contracts pose to agencies. Further limiting the number of contract awards under strategic sourcing will likely continue to make these contracts must-wins for companies wanting to do business in the federal space.

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